19385

HJ 506

LUNACY AND MENTAL TREATMENT ACTS

Annual Report of the Board of Control to the Lord Chancellor

For the Year 1956

Presented pursuant to Act of Parliament

Ordered by The House of Commons *to be Printed*
25th July 1957

LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
EIGHTPENCE NET

242

HJ/506

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THE FORTY-THIRD ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF CONTROL FOR THE YEAR 1956

To the Right Honourable The Lord High Chancellor

My Lord,

In pursuance of Section 162 of the Lunacy Act, 1890, we beg to submit the following Report:—

Introduction

This Report refers briefly to the condition of mental hospitals and other institutional accommodation for the mentally ill (but not the mentally defective) in England and Wales, and to the care of such patients. Since the coming into force of the National Health Service Act, 1946, the Minister of Health has become responsible for providing and maintaining mental hospitals and hospitals for the mentally defective. The Annual Report of the Minister to Parliament now includes sections on mental health with statistics relating both to mental illness and to mental deficiency.

Accommodation

On 31st December, 1956, there were 148,161 patients under care under the provisions of the Lunacy and Mental Treatment Acts, 1890 to 1930. There were also 213 patients in Naval and Military Hospitals, 189 Broadmoor patients in mental hospitals and 917 in Broadmoor Institution. The total number of patients notified to us as under treatment for mental illness was, therefore, 149,480, compared with 150,856 at 31st December, 1955.

The number of patients in mental hospitals, excluding former public assistance institutions, decreased by 1,193 during 1956 to 138,215.

Calculated upon standards of space prescribed by the Ministry of Health, these hospitals provide accommodation for 124,218 patients or 1,043 more than at the end of 1955. Out of this accommodation 3,005 beds were not available for use ; 1,368 being used for other services, 653 awaiting renovation or repairs, and 984 unusable because of shortage of staff. The amount of bed accommodation in use was 262 less than at the end of 1955. The hospitals were overcrowded to the extent of 17,002 beds or 931 less than at the end of 1955.

Admissions

The admissions to designated mental hospitals in 1956 were 83,994 as compared with 78,586 in 1955 and 55,856 in 1950. Admissions to all institutions and private single care were 88,542 in 1956 as compared with 83,289 in 1955.

There was again an increase in the number of voluntary admissions and a fall in admissions under certificate. During 1955, 75 per cent. (58,927) of the admissions to designated mental hospitals were voluntary patients and 23·3 per cent. (18,286) were admitted under certificate. During 1956, the admissions of voluntary patients had increased to 78·2 per cent. (65,637) and certified cases had fallen to 20·1 per cent. (16,904). To all types of care there was an increase of 6,701 to a total of 69,479 voluntary admissions and a fall of 1,539 to 17,559 in admissions of certified cases.

Of the total admissions in 1956, 38,137 were re-admissions, 43·1 per cent. of the total compared with 41·6 per cent. in 1955.

Nurses

Although there was a welcome improvement in the recruitment of student nurses, the shortage of nursing staff remains serious and the number of beds out of use owing to lack of staff has gone up during the year by 71 to 984. The information given in the table below about nursing staff in mental hospitals refers only to staff in those hospitals specifically classified as mental hospitals, i.e., those which have at least 90 per cent. of their beds allocated for mental patients, and hospitals accommodating both mental and mentally defective, but no other types of patient, where the mental allocation is the larger. These hospitals cover about 95 per cent. of all beds for mentally ill patients in National Health Service hospitals.

Grade	1955 31st December		1956 30th September	
	Whole-time	Part-time	Whole-time	Part-time
Total: All grades	19,649	6,720	20,358	6,937
Male...	10,542	149	10,709	197
Female	9,107	6,571	9,649	6,740
Trained nurses:				
Total...	11,164	1,643	11,040	1,650
Male...	7,435	104	7,319	138
Female	3,729	1,539	3,721	1,512
Student nurses:				
Total...	3,371	—	4,026	—
Male...	1,402	—	1,674	—
Female	1,969	—	2,352	—
Others (mainly nursing assistants):				
Total...	5,114	5,077	5,292	5,287
Male...	1,705	45	1,716	59
Female	3,409	5,032	3,576	5,228

Registered Hospitals, Licensed Houses and Nursing Homes

The four hospitals* registered for the reception of persons suffering from mental illness provided at the end of the year a total of just under 1,300 beds. They were visited and found to be in their usual good condition.

There were at the end of the year 23 licensed houses† of which 9 were licensed by the Minister of Health and 14 by provincial justices. They were licensed for the accommodation of a maximum of 1,108 patients. Visits to them were made as required by statute and in general conditions in them were satisfactory, but one continues to require the attention of the Board.

There were twelve nursing homes approved by the Minister of Health for the reception of voluntary or temporary patients under the Mental Treatment Act, 1930.

Single Patients

At the end of 1956 there were 48 patients‡ in private single care, a reduction of 4 during the year. All were visited and conditions found to be satisfactory.

* Cheadle Royal, near Manchester; St. Andrews, Northampton; The Retreat, York; and Barnwood House, Gloucester. These hospitals are not vested in the Minister of Health, but are managed on a voluntary basis.

† These are privately owned houses or homes in which patients are received for payment.

‡ A patient in single care resides with and under the legal control of a private individual.

Broadmoor Institution

The institution was regularly visited during the year. There was a slight falling off in the numbers of nursing staff employed during the year: otherwise the conditions call for no special comment.

Royal Naval Hospital, Great Yarmouth, and P Wing, Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley

The usual visit was paid to each of these Service Hospitals, and satisfactory reports were received.

By Order of the Board,

I. F. ARMER,
Chairman.

D. F. BROWN,
Secretary.

Ministry of Health Building,
Savile Row,
London, W.1.

June, 1957.

APPENDIX

Distribution of Patients

The distribution of all patients at the end of the year 1956 may be seen by reference to Tables I and II, but it may be pointed out that 98·3 per cent. of them were resident in hospitals vested in the Minister of Health.

Movement of Patients

Admissions, Discharges, Transfers to other Care and Deaths in 1956. The following statement includes patients of each status (Voluntary, Temporary and Certified):—

		Total
Resident at 1st January, 1956		150,856
Direct admissions	Total	88,542
	not previously admitted ...	50,405
	other	38,137
Indirect admissions (excluding regradings) (1)		781
		240,179
Discharged and Departed	Total	76,481
	Recovered(2)	20,237
	Relieved	47,742
	Not improved	8,109
	By operation of law(3)	393
Transferred (under Order) to other care(1)		877
Died		13,341
Remained at 31st December, 1956		149,480
		240,179

(1) The figure of " Indirect admissions (excluding regradings) " is less than " Transferred (under Order) to other care " because a few transfers to other care have been recorded as direct admissions.

(2) Including any patients discharged shortly after admission as " Not now insane ".

(3) By reason of irregular admission documents, the lapsing of reception orders (Section 38, Lunacy Act, 1890, and Section 7, Lunacy Act, 1891) or discharged after absconding (Section 85, Lunacy Act, 1890).

TABLE I

PATIENTS UNDER CARE AT 31ST DECEMBER, 1956 AND 31ST DECEMBER, 1955

ANALYSIS BY TYPE OF CARE AND CLASS OF PATIENT

		31st December, 1956				31st Dec., 1955
		Private	Health Service	Broad-moor Patients	Total	Total
TOTAL	Total(1)	4,086	144,288	1,106	149,480	150,856
	Males	1,341	61,476	887	63,704	64,339
	Females	2,745	82,812	219	85,776	86,517
In hospitals vested in the Minister of Health:—						
(i) Mental Hospitals ...	Total(2)	1,694	143,710	189	145,593	146,867
	Males	551	61,244	161	61,956	62,531
	Females	1,143	82,466	28	83,637	84,336
(ii) Teaching Hospitals ...	Total	—	392	—	392	382
	Males	—	171	—	171	168
	Females	—	221	—	221	214
(iii) Broadmoor Institution ...	Total	—	—	917	917	929
	Males	—	—	726	726	734
	Females	—	—	191	191	195
In premises not vested in the Minister of Health but deemed to be Mental Hospitals.	Total	—	36	—	36	40
	Males	—	16	—	16	17
	Females	—	20	—	20	23
In Registered Hospitals	Total	1,164	122	—	1,286	1,306
	Males	411	45	—	456	467
	Females	753	77	—	830	839
In Licensed Houses:—						
Metropolitan	Total	217	—	—	217	225
	Males	45	—	—	45	46
	Females	172	—	—	172	179
Provincial	Total	605	28	—	633	676
	Males	109	—	—	109	129
	Females	496	28	—	524	547
In Nursing Homes approved under the Mental Treatment Act.	Total	145	—	—	145	147
	Males	2	—	—	2	4
	Females	143	—	—	143	143
In Naval and Military Hospitals ...	Total	213	—	—	213	232
	Males	213	—	—	213	232
	Females	—	—	—	—	—
In Private Single Care	Total	48	—	—	48	52
	Males	10	—	—	10	11
	Females	38	—	—	38	41

(1) The daily average numbers resident during the calender year 1956 were 63,749 males and 85,322 females.

(2) The numbers in former Public Assistance Institutions included in the totals were 7,378 at 31st December, 1956 and 7,459 at 31st December, 1955.

TABLE II

ANALYSIS BY TYPE OF CARE AND STATUS OF PATIENT

		31st December, 1956				31st Dec., 1955
		Voluntary	Temporary	Certified	Total	Total
TOTAL	Total	45,069	397	104,014	149,480	150,856
	Males	19,142	130	44,432	63,704	64,339
	Females	25,927	267	59,582	85,776	86,517
In hospitals vested in the Minister of Health:—						
(i) Mental Hospitals ...	Total	43,485	384	101,724	145,593	146,867
	Males	18,670	126	43,160	61,956	62,531
	Females	24,815	258	58,564	83,637	84,336
(ii) Teaching Hospitals ...	Total	392	—	—	392	382
	Males	171	—	—	171	168
	Females	221	—	—	221	214
(iii) Broadmoor Institution ...	Total	—	—	917	917	929
	Males	—	—	726	726	734
	Females	—	—	191	191	195
In premises not vested in the Minister of Health but deemed to be Mental Hospitals	Total	—	—	36	36	40
	Males	—	—	16	16	17
	Females	—	—	20	20	23
In Registered Hospitals	Total	649	9	628	1,286	1,306
	Males	218	3	235	456	467
	Females	431	6	393	830	839
In Licensed Houses:—						
Metropolitan	Total	130	—	87	217	225
	Males	25	—	20	45	46
	Females	105	—	67	172	179
Provincial	Total	261	3	369	633	676
	Males	50	1	58	109	129
	Females	211	2	311	524	547
In Nursing Homes approved under the Mental Treatment Act	Total	144	1	—	145	147
	Males	2	—	—	2	4
	Females	142	1	—	143	143
In Naval and Military Hospitals ...	Total	4	—	209	213	232
	Males	4	—	209	213	232
	Females	—	—	—	—	—
In Private Single-Care	Total	4	—	44	48	52
	Males	2	—	8	10	11
	Females	2	—	36	38	41
TOTAL						
Private patients	Total	1,998	16	2,072	4,086	4,291
	Males	603	6	732	1,341	1,415
	Females	1,395	10	1,340	2,745	2,876
Health Service patients	Total	43,071	381	100,836	144,288	145,457
	Males	18,539	124	42,813	61,476	62,040
	Females	24,532	257	58,023	82,812	83,417
Broadmoor patients	Total	—	—	1,106	1,106	1,108
	Males	—	—	887	887	884
	Females	—	—	219	219	224

TABLE III

ANALYSIS OF CHANGES BY CLASS AND STATUS OF PATIENT

	Increase (or decrease —) during 1956			Average annual increase (or decrease —) in five years 1952–56 inclusive		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
TOTAL	— 1,376	— 635	— 741	282	145	137
Class: private	— 205	— 74	— 131	— 247	— 98	— 149
health service	— 1,169	— 564	— 605	513	228	285
Broadmoor patients ...	— 2	3	— 5	16	15	1
Status: Voluntary	5,001	1,881	3,120	3,184	1,276	1,908
temporary	— 84	— 39	— 45	10	—	10
certified	— 6,293	— 2,477	— 3,816	— 2,912	— 1,131	— 1,781

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